



Ephesians Week 4 - Ephesians 2:11-22

October 1, 2023 - Pastor Isaiah Fern

Review:

Ch 1 - Supremacy of Christ and how God chose these believers and future believers to be recipients of an inheritance of Grace, Mercy, and Eternal Salvation.

Ch 2-3 - Reconciliation & equality of all Christian believers regardless of race, culture, or spiritual background because of the blood of Jesus and His immeasurable grace being sufficient as our foundation and peace.

Ch 4-6 - Gives instruction to how Jesus' followers/the Church should act and think for the sake of unity and perseverance.

Paul makes it clear that followers of Jesus should find their sole identity in being in and with Christ. He is the center of our identity, our values, our behaviors. We are to be completely submitted to Christ.

The **KEY verse** of the whole book is: **Ephesians 2:8** "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not of yourself its the gift of God."

3 main points:

1. Barriers between believers
2. The blood of Jesus
3. The church being made by people not by a buildin

1. Barrier between Jew/Gentile believers: What Does the Bible Say About Circumcision?

Eph. 2:11 "Therefore remember that previously you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by the so-called 'Circumcision' *which is performed in the flesh by human hands...*"

THEREFORE is an important word meaning the next words are based on what was just said before...

Circumcision **marked a covenant** established with Abraham ([Gen. 17:1-14](#)). For the Jews, circumcision was more than a rite of passage. For them, it was a sign of their covenant with God. Circumcision marked them as the chosen people - God's special treasure.

According to [Romans 2:29](#), as Paul said, "true circumcision is a matter of the **heart, performed by the Spirit of God.**" Physical circumcision is no longer necessary. God lists it as one of the good works that do not make us right with God. NOTHING we do makes us worthy- it is only by His immeasurable grace ([Romans 2:7](#)).

V. 12 "Remember that you were at that time **separate from Christ**, excluded from the people of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world."

To be **without Christ** means to be: without spiritual blessings, without light, peace, rest, safety, hope, without a Prophet, Priest, or King.

- Do you remember what it was like without Christ? When you were separated from God? Share.

- How does the thought of others not knowing this hope and transformative power of God affect you?

Praise God for the reminder of v12. Some of you are not where you want to be, but you aren't who you used to be and that's WORTH GIVING GOD PRAISE FOR EVERY DAY!

Some of us are **still living in that darkness** and brokenness because we are still separate from Christ. It is by His grace that **God offers us relationship** regardless of what we have done. **Repent of your sins and believe in Jesus** and you will experience his transformative power and blessing because of his GRACE.

- Something to consider: What have you done that makes you think you are in any way better than other followers of Jesus? **It's only by GOD'S GRACE...nothing you do is on your own or makes you any more worthy.**

- What have you done that makes you think you are not worthy of being a follower of Jesus? **It's only by GOD'S GRACE...nothing you do can make you too far gone for His grace.**

There are actions that naturally come out of a life submitted to Christ, but those are NOT what brings you near to Christ. You have **only** been brought near to Him by the sacrifice and power of the BLOOD of JESUS!

2. What is so significant about the BLOOD?

V. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who previously were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

“Thousands of years before scientists understood the complex and extraordinary life-sustaining properties of blood, the Bible informed us that ‘the life of every creature is in its blood’ ([Leviticus 17:14, NLT](#)). In ancient Israel, blood was not only a symbol for life; it was equivalent to life itself. In most occurrences where blood was shed in Scripture, it meant that life had ended. To remove the blood is to terminate life.”

It takes about **60 seconds** for all the blood in your body to complete its journey. It travels from your heart to your extremities and returns there and back again. It wasn't until the 1600's that **William Harvey (distant relative of our very own Roman [& Leah] Harvey)** first noticed circulation.

The human body produces two million blood cells deep in its bone marrow per second and pumps 1500-2000 gallons per day. Once formed, those red blood cells (RBCs) move into the bloodstream with white blood cells and platelets, all circulating through 60,000 miles of arteries, veins, and capillaries in the human body. (Frame of reference: 100,000 is 4x the circumference of the earth)

Why is the life of all flesh in the blood?

Blood brings all different things to the different parts of your body, to your brain, everywhere. Life in the blood means the continual circulation of blood through your body is what keeps you alive.

Jesus' blood is significant because it says His death (his spilling of His blood) paid for our sins that made us deserving of death. Although physical blood sustains physical life, **Jesus' lifeblood is the only blood that provides eternal life**, through His crucifixion and resurrection. **This is the reality of the upside-down Kingdom that Jesus represents.** The uniting of humanity was won not through the blood of **conquest and victory**, but through the **blood of defeat**, which ends in victory.

Through God's ordained system of sacrifice in the Old Testament, God **laid the groundwork for a message** that would not be fully grasped until later.

Many people suggest different ways to come to God.

- What are some of the ways we as people try to come to God for salvation?

The only way to be brought near to God to receive His salvation is **by the blood of Christ**. Whenever you take communion...remember that your life is in the blood of Jesus. **Read Ephesians 1:7-8.**

- What idea or sin in your life do you consider not worthy of Jesus' sacrifice? You have decided that this is just the way you are....that you will always struggle with this.

-His blood was sufficient to bring life into the death in your veins. Will you trust Him with it?

3. Broke down middle wall/ Church is people, not a building

V. 14,15 "For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into one* and broke down the barrier of the **dividing wall** (middle wall) by abolishing in His flesh the hostility, *which is the Law composed of commandments expressed in ordinances,*"

Greek "*mesotoichon*": partition; wall.

A wall of stone about 6' high separated the court of the Gentiles from that of the Jews in the Temple; to cross it meant **death to any Gentile**. Jews always endeavored to live by themselves among the Gentiles. Their own laws, rites, and customs made a separation between them and the Gentiles.

Christ broke down the wall that separated Jews and Gentiles. When Jesus died, the literal veil of the temple was ripped from top to bottom, indicating that the way into the holiest place in the Temple had been made for **all** men, the old law had ended, and a new covenant was now in place.

Paul wrote this from a Roman prison because he longed to build a bridge between the Jews and Gentiles. He came to Jerusalem for a feast but brought a Gentile (Trophemus) with him. A rumor went around that Paul took him past the wall of partition in the temple. This was so serious an offense that there were 13 signs built into the wall saying: "No foreigner is to enter within the forecourt and the balustrade around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his subsequent death."

This was a 1,000-year-old prejudice Paul was dealing with...and it is still alive today in various ways among believers.

Today, it is seen in our feelings of division towards those who are of different races, lifestyles, and political parties. We should never look down our noses at unbelievers

or those who are different than us. When someone walks into the church they should sense the broken walls of division and **feel our unity**.

Any wall of separation is now gone because following Jesus is greater than any previous division. **If the Lordship of Jesus Christ is not greater than any difference** you have with others - be it political, racial, economic, language, geography or whatever - then **you have not fully understood** what it means to be under the Lordship of Jesus.

John 13:35 NLT - "So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

The world does not know how to look past differences. **But we do.**

It's been said that Sunday morning is the most segregated time in America. **Not at Good News....**This is not because we preach diversity-- it is because we preach CHRIST and HIM CRUCIFIED and that His Grace is sufficient for all people!

V. 15b,16 "so that in Himself He might make the two one new person, *in this way* establishing peace; **16** and that He might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the hostility."

Any wall of separation is *now gone* because *following Jesus* is greater than any *previous division*.

Early Christians called themselves a **"third race" or a "new race."**

Early Christians recognized that they were not Jews, not Gentiles, but **one new man**, embracing all who were in Jesus.

You are a **NEW RACE**. He made you a new human being.

We have to be careful not to allow our worldly prejudices of politics, race, cultural, or extra-biblical religious preferences take the spotlight over the values of CHRIST!

The division in the Church is not sending out the message Jesus wanted.

You don't join the Church....Regardless of your denomination, family, cultural, racial values, etc...you are **BORN INTO the CHURCH** because of Christ and are expected to **adhere to His values** above your own!

V. 17 "And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; **18** for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father."

Access = prosagōgē "Access is probably the best translation of prosagoge, though it could be 'introduction.' In oriental courts there was a prosagoge who brought a person into the presence of the king." **(Foulkes)**

We have been properly introduced to the King....through the blood of Christ.

-You have access to God because of the sacrifice of Christ. The question is...will you approach Him? What prevents you from accessing Him and His grace, His power?

-What is a spiritual gift or promise you have not approached God about because you have not recognized the special access you have with Him?

V. 19-22 "So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, (this would be Paul, Peter, John and those who had personal relationship with Christ when he was on earth) **Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."**

You are no longer strangers and foreigners. The Gentiles should not regard themselves as "second-class citizens" in God's kingdom in any regard. Nor should you.

- Do you see yourself as a full or 2nd class citizen in God's family?

Christ is the HEAD (cornerstone) of His church...not the Pastor. Don't put the pressure on the Pastor, your spouse, parents, anyone to provide everything you need spiritually... that's Christ's job. Christ never gets off course. People in our lives are simply one of the many foundation blocks given to align us to Christ.

- Are you trusting in a pastor or anyone else in your life more than Christ? Or turning to them before you turn to Jesus for direction/guidance?

The Church is the community of believers, NOT the building.

Church attendance is down four points among Protestants (from 44% to 40%) and seven points among Catholics (from 37% to 30%). Republicans (40%) remain much more likely than Democrats (25%) or independents (25%) to attend religious services. Only 5% attend virtually now.

Attend Religious services once a week: 58% - Evangelical Protestants, 85% - Jehovah Witness, 77% - Mormon

- Is it necessary to go to a Church building to worship with other believers? Not necessarily...

- Is it necessary as a believer to gather with other believers, including those outside of their family, to specifically receive the foundation of the Word, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer (Act 2)? YES.

- If you are not a part of a life-giving body, can you truly experience the fullness of the abundant life God has to offer? No.

Discuss why we feel so strongly about this ^^

We often have legitimate reasons for hurt that keep us from connecting with a local body of believers, but GOD KNEW...and yes He still wants you to be in community with other believers.

When God says it's time to go...yes you should switch communities. When there is **unrepentant sin or abuse** by the authority, it's time to go....**But dont give up so soon**. Most times, if we wait long enough, help out, and stand up for what's right, God will bring justice in his timing soon enough before you leave.

The best time to go for a swim is not in the **middle of the storm**.

Additional Questions:

Where have you placed your life's hope?

What idea or sin in your life do you act like is not worthy of Jesus' sacrifice?